United Nations

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

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Contents

Chapter		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–8	1
II.	Progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General	9–11	2
III.	Obstacles to the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General	12–24	4
IV.	Modalities for further action	25–60	7
Annex			
	Documentation and proceedings of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa		13

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. On 25 September 1997, the Security Council was convened at the level of foreign ministers to consider the need for a concerted international effort to promote peace and security in Africa. In a statement issued by the President of the Council at the conclusion of the meeting (S/PRST/1997/46), the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the causes of conflict in Africa, ways to prevent those conflicts, and how to lay a foundation for durable peace and economic growth.

2. In accordance with that request, the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) was submitted to the Security Council in April 1998, as well as to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. The General Assembly, by paragraph 15 of its resolution 53/92 of 7 December 1998, requested the President of the General Assembly, in preparation for the discussion at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group of the Assembly to monitor the implementation of the present resolution and, in particular, the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council and the Assembly on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In that regard, the Council decided that the Working Group should determine its mandate and modalities, taking into account the outcome of the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council on that matter.

B. Mandate

3. In resolution 54/234 of 22 December 1999, entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", the General Assembly (a) requested the President of the General Assembly to establish the open-ended ad hoc working group to monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his above-mentioned report to the General Assembly and the Security Council, to prepare for discussions at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly; (b) requested that, in addition to monitoring those recommendations, the ad hoc working group monitor the implementation of agreed conclusions 1999/2 adopted by the Economic and Social Council and of Economic and Social Council decision 1999/270, as well as poverty eradication, debt relief, the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and support to countries in post-conflict situations; and (c) requested the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session to establish the ad hoc working group, to serve as its ex officio chairman, to designate, in close consultation with Member States, two vice-chairpersons and to convene an organizational meeting of the ad hoc working group not later than March 2000 to decide on modalities and develop arrangements for the effective functioning of the ad hoc working group.

4. At its substantive session of 1999, the Economic and Social Council discussed the implementation of the relevant recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General. On 28 July 1999, the Council adopted agreed conclusions 1999/2, on the theme "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development".[1]

C. Organization of work

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/234, the President of the General Assembly, Theo-Ben Gurirab (Namibia), served as Chairman of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa and, in that capacity, designated, on 1 February 2000, Kishore Mahbubani, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations, and Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. The Chief of Disarmament and Decolonization Organs Servicing Branch of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services was Secretary of the Working Group. The substantive secretariat of the Working Group consisted of representatives of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and representatives of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

6. The Working Group held three sessions during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly: the first session was held on 7 March and from 13 to 15 March, the second from 15 to 19 May, and the third from 17 to 21 July 2000. The Working Group held a total of 14 meetings. A number of informal meetings were also held. During the course of its meetings, the Working Group held a general exchange of views, reviewed written information on the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General (A/AC.258/CRP.3), and heard oral presentations by special representatives of the Secretary-General and representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations programmes and the specialized agencies.

D. Web site of the Working Group

7. At the request of the Working Group, a web site (www.un.org/esa/africa/adhocWg/index.html) was set up to provide up-to-date information on its work. The web site contains background information relating to the Group, including progress reports submitted to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. It also contains statements made at the various sessions of the Group and comprehensive matrices reflecting the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, based upon feedback from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. This web site will be updated on a regular basis to reflect the progress made in the proceedings of the Group, as well as the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

E. Structure of the present report

8. Chapter II of the present report contains a broad and concise overview of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. Chapter III provides a summary of the major constraints and obstacles encountered in the implementation of those recommendations, while chapter IV contains suggestions for further action and measures that can be taken to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations covering the defined thematic areas of focus. The annex to the present report contains a list of the documentation and summary of the proceedings of the Group.

II. Progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General

9. Discernible progress has been made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General in a wide range of areas. A detailed review of the progress made is contained in conference room paper A/AC.258/CRP.3. Key highlights are given below on an indicative basis:

(a) **Peacemaking and peacekeeping**. Recommendations relating to peacemaking and peacekeeping have been actively taken up by the Security Council and the General Assembly, and the progress made to September 1999 was outlined in the progress report submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/1999/1008);

(b) **Protection of civilians in armed conflicts**. The protection of civilians in armed conflicts has received considerable attention from the Security Council since 1998 (see S/PRST/1999/6 and Security Council resolution 1265 (1999)). More recently, a report presented by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in September 1999 (S/1999/957) resulted in the adoption of Security Council resolution 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000, aimed at securing commitment to key recommendations of the Secretary-General. By that resolution, the Council has ensured that the question of protection of civilians in armed conflicts forms an integral part of its deliberations every time it considers peacekeeping operations;

(c) **Addressing refugee security issues**. Since 1998, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and relevant agencies have taken a number of initiatives in relation to the security, civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, which are included in the "ladder of options" initiative, proposed by UNHCR. These options range from preventive measures and cooperation with national law-enforcement authorities, through deployment of civilian or police monitors, to military deployment;

(d) **Mitigating the social and environmental impact of refugees**. Aimed at bridging the gap between humanitarian assistance and long-term development, the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP)/World Bank/UNHCR "Brookings process" was developed in 1999;

(e) **Post-conflict peace-building**. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, has established an inter-agency reference group which has been assigned the task of resolving issues related to the programming in an integrated manner, of post-conflict activities. The Standing Committee has also developed the inter-agency consolidated appeal process as a strategic planning tool that promotes the transition from relief to development;

(f) **Financing recovery**. The Post-Conflict Fund of the World Bank, which supports the planning, piloting and analysis of reconstruction activities by funding Governments and partner organizations, was converted into a Trust Fund in 1999. The World Bank, on behalf of some donors, administers trust funds which complement the Post-Conflict Fund. Along the same lines, UNDP, on behalf of various donors, administers trust funds to support countries in transition from conflict to sustainable peace and economic growth;

(g) **Working towards a coordinated response**. The United Nations has been developing further the strategic framework approach to political, human rights, humanitarian and development activities, which is aimed at promoting a durable peace and sustainable development. This approach will ensure, inter alia, that humanitarian activity supports overall peace-building activities. After consultation with the Administrative Committee on Coordination, generic guidelines for the further application of the strategic framework were approved. The experience to date has afforded some valuable lessons, and the approach is now being applied in Sierra Leone and Burundi. The Economic Commission for Africa has recently launched the Mano River Basin initiative, aimed at assisting the process of post-conflict peace-building within and among Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone;

(h) **Promotion of human rights and the rule of law**. A majority of African Governments have now ratified the major international human rights instruments. Convened under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity in Mauritius in April 1999, the first African Ministerial Conference on Human Rights adopted a declaration and a plan of action for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa;

(i) **Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women**. As at April 2000, 49 African Governments had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women. Six months after its adoption, two African Governments have ratified and three have signed the optional protocol to the Convention;

(j) **Emphasizing social development**. Under the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, significant progress has been made in addressing education and health issues in African countries, as detailed in the report presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination in June 2000 (E/AC.51/2000/6 and Corr.1). With the support of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (WHO/AFRO), almost all African countries have launched the Africa 2000 Initiative on Water Supply and Sanitation and prepared action plans;

(k) **Food security**. The World Food Summit, which was held in Rome in 1996, addressed the close link between food security and peace and adopted the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action.[2] The contributions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the areas of food security, natural resource management and agricultural and rural development, as well as a fair and market-oriented world trade system for agricultural commodities, relate to key determinants of lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa. In April 2000, the Secretary-General created an inter-agency task force, led by FAO, on the United Nations response to long-term food security, agricultural development and related aspects in the Horn of Africa to end chronic malnutrition in the region;

(l) **Debt relief**. In September 1999, the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Development Committee of the World Bank endorsed the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative which, building upon wide-ranging comments from civil society and the international community, has been modified to provide faster, deeper and broader debt relief and to strengthen the link between debt relief and poverty reduction. In late 1999, IMF replaced its concessional lending facility (the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility) by the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) which is aimed at making poverty reduction efforts among low-income

members a key and more explicit element of a renewed growth-oriented policy. A number of donor countries have contributed to the HIPC Trust Fund;

(m) **Opening international markets**. An Africa-Europe Summit meeting was held under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the European Union at Cairo, in April 2000. The Summit meeting adopted a declaration and a plan of action, dealing, inter alia, with trade and market access. The Cotonou Agreement, which defines relations between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and the European Union, was signed on 23 June 2000. The agreement provides a new framework for trade cooperation and economic partnerships between the two groups. The Congress of the United States of America passed the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, aimed at promoting trade with Africa by lowering or eliminating tariffs and quotas on products from the region. This was signed into law on 18 May 2000.

(n) **Support for regional cooperation**. In collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank, UNDP is providing assistance to OAU in the implementation of the Abuja Treaty to develop capacity for the establishment of the African Economic Community;

(o) **Harmonizing current international and bilateral initiatives**. The United Nations Development Group, through the coordination mechanisms of the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, thematic groups and the resident coordinator system continues to play a major role in harmonizing activities of the United Nations system at the country level. In addition, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa ensures coordination at the regional level in the key areas covered by the Initiative.

10. In September 1999, African Governments took a decisive step to address the root causes of conflict and to put the continent on the path to sustainable development by calling for the convening of the African Ministerial Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa within the framework of OAU. The Conference was conceived as part of a long-term process to help build African capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict by addressing, decisively, the issue of Africa's social and economic development. The first Conference, held at Abuja, Nigeria, in May 2000, proposed a plan of action and implementation mechanism to facilitate the Conference process.

11. While some progress may be discerned in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, it should be noted that in most areas there are ongoing activities that require monitoring on a regular basis. It should also be noted that in a number of areas it is difficult, or premature, to assess the impact of activities and to measure performance. In order to gauge the progress made in those areas, reliable, agreed upon indicators must be developed, wherever appropriate.

III. Obstacles to the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General

12. Notwithstanding the progress made in implementing some of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, a number of obstacles remain. These stem from a variety of interrelated factors, including insufficient political will on the part of the international community, inadequate resources and capacity, deficiencies in governance in some African countries, the persistence of armed conflict, limited access to technology, a general deterioration of public health, a weak private sector and economic structure and difficulties of coordination.

A. Political will

13. Effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General requires strong political will on the part of African countries and the international community. In his report, the Secretary-General has clearly and candidly set out the responsibilities of African countries and their development partners. There have been some encouraging examples of progress made and notable developments in that regard, as mentioned above. In many cases, however, the required commitment has been lacking. One example is the report of the Chairman of the Independent Inquiry into United Nations actions during the 1994 Rwanda genocide (S/1999/1257), commissioned by the Secretary-General and examined by the Security

Council. In a number of cases, there remains a lack of political will in some African countries to implement the peace accords and other measures required to ensure peace and sustainable development. The lack of political will is also evidenced in the failure of donor countries to provide sufficient resources, both financial and technical, to address many of the problems identified in intergovernmental processes, and by the Secretary-General in his report. A sustained tripartite effort by the African countries, the United Nations system of organizations and the donor community is necessary for the successful implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

B. Governance

14. Since 1998, progress has been made in the area of governance in most African countries. Efforts, must however, be sustained and in a number of cases there remains room for improvement. The culture of transparency and accountability has yet to take root in some countries, which makes it difficult to consolidate the reforms recommended by the Secretary-General, in particular with respect to the promotion of human rights, combating corruption and enhancing administrative efficiency. Weak governance remains one of the causes of continuing political instability and violence in some African countries.

C. Armed conflict

15. The proliferation of armed conflict and high influxes of refugees have hampered efforts to achieve progress in economic and social development in some African countries. The difficulty in fully implementing peace agreements and overcoming the numerous obstacles to resolving ongoing conflicts, the emergence of new conflicts and the resultant influxes of refugees continue effectively to cripple the productive activities of the countries concerned and to erode further the poor social infrastructure that exists in many. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that, despite the acute lack of resources and equipment, African Governments, through OAU and its subregional organizations, have shouldered increasing responsibility for the resolution of conflict and the promotion of peace and security in the continent. It is imperative to reiterate, however, that the efforts undertaken by African Governments in this field should in no way relieve the Security Council of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In some cases, however, the international response to conflict situations in Africa has been inadequate. Illicit trafficking in arms to Africa, as well as the deviation of resources from development to military activities, continue to impede progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

16. More than one half of all conflicts are recurring situations. Conflict prevention and a successful peace process rely heavily on the effective implementation of demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration programmes. Recent experience, however, has shown that some of these programmes, which are mainly financed through trust funds, could suffer from a lack of resources.

D. Financial resources

17. Although Africa as a whole, including its economic recovery and development, has been assigned priority by Member States, the total resources allocated to development assistance to African countries, especially official development assistance (ODA), has been decreasing since the early 1990s. This includes bilateral and multilateral assistance, in particular ODA, rendered through the various United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies. Since Africa has less access to private capital markets, declining ODA has not been supplemented by foreign direct investment flows as happened in some developing countries in the 1990s. Furthermore, it has been observed that, in general, tied aid has reduced the effectiveness and amount of aid available for use within the recipient countries. Also, the savings rate in Africa is quite low, in part because of the high level of poverty and also partly owing to the inappropriate allocation of resources towards non-productive expenditure.

18. Tariff peaks continue to limit market access and thus affect the ability of African countries to maximize export earnings. In addition, structural adjustment programmes, which many countries are still undergoing, and the heavy debt burden, together with the excessive obligation to repay, have also undermined the implementation of anti-poverty and other social development programmes. Despite recent positive developments on the enhanced HIPC, so far

only a handful of countries have actually received debt relief. Financing of the HIPC Trust Fund remains a major constraint to the functioning of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa. The poverty reduction strategy papers of IMF and the World Bank provide an important framework for defining policies for poverty reduction. It is, however, also an eligibility requirement for HIPC. It is important, therefore, that African countries build their capacities to prepare such papers speedily and efficiently. International assistance to enhance capacity in their preparation, at the request of the African countries concerned, could contribute to speeding up the eligibility of African countries for debt relief in the framework of HIPC and minimizing the burden on their administrative capacities.

E. Human resource capacity

19. Many African countries suffer from inadequate capacity to deal with a host of economic, social and political challenges. This includes a range of capacities, from economic management to human rights. The decline in capacity occurred over time and may be attributable to the economic and political crises of the 1980s and early 1990s and the subsequent imposition of austerity measures. In addition, increasing political instability and conflict have also resulted in a brain drain and added to the erosion of institutional capacity for economic management and administration in general and, in particular, for carrying out some of the needed economic reforms recommended by the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the problem of generating accurate statistical information on a timely basis has also made it difficult effectively to formulate policy and plan programmes. Overall, the lack of capacity has set back efforts by African countries to take ownership of development assistance.

F. Public health

20. Africa faces a disease burden of epic proportions, with the re-emergence of old diseases and the appearance of new ones, including HIV/AIDS. Of the 34 million HIV/AIDS cases in the world, over 24 million are in Africa. HIV/AIDS is now the leading cause of death in Africa. Along with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis has re-emerged as a major threat on the continent, infecting some 200 million persons. Of the 400 million cases of malaria in the world, 300 million are in Africa where 2 million persons die of the disease each year. In addition, 870 women per 100,000 in Africa die in childbirth, compared to 20 in developed countries, and 1.2 million children under five years of age die from childhood illnesses.

21. The enormity of the problem has hampered progress in implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General. Many African countries lack the requisite skilled personnel and research capacity to make progress in this area. In addition, poor public health infrastructure is being further jeopardized in those countries where there is conflict. The lack of a clean water supply and appropriate sanitation facilities also contributes to the poor health of many Africans. The resources available for combating diseases are not commensurate with the task. For example, current spending on AIDS in Africa is only $165 million per year compared to the $2 billion to $3 billion estimated by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) as necessary to combat the pandemic. The costs of treating HIV/AIDS, including retro-viral drugs, are generally high and accessibility is very limited. The recent announcement by five pharmaceutical companies to cut the cost of AIDS drugs for Africa is welcome. Effective treatment is still, however, far beyond the reach of the average African. Compounding the problem of resources, the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and the discrimination associated with it remain a problem in many countries. The Lomé Declaration on HIV/AIDS has sought to address these issues.

G. Private sector and structure of economies

22. The indigenous private sector in many African countries is small and must deal with a number of problems, including low productivity and a lack of investment, adequate infrastructure, credit and market information. Furthermore, many African countries still remain highly dependent on one or two primary commodities for the bulk of their exports. The programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1993-2002) and the Plan of Action of the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization,[3] aimed at enhancing the efforts of the African countries to intensify and expand industrial cooperation among themselves, are yet to be fully implemented. Despite

market openings, many countries remain unable to capitalize on the new opportunities to export new products. Furthermore, in areas in which African exports are competitive, for example in textiles and some agricultural commodities, Africa continues to face discriminatory tariff and non-tariff barriers.

H. Access to technology

23. The widening technological gap and the deepening digital divide between African countries and developed countries have been major impediments to development. Non-access to modern technology has resulted in the low levels of productivity and the lack of competitiveness of products exported by many African countries. In this regard, the international community should strengthen efforts to transfer technology on concessional and preferential conditions to Africa, in particular information technology that would complement and enhance the development and modernization of the basic sectors of the economy. It will also be necessary to address the major impediments, such as lack of infrastructure, education, capacity-building, investment and connectivity to ensure the full participation of the majority of Africans in the ongoing revolution in the field of information and communications technologies.

I. Coordination

24. While significant progress has been made in coordination at the country and regional levels, a number of problems remain. These concern, first and foremost, the number of United Nations system-wide coordination frameworks, mechanisms and processes, and the need for greater coherence among them. This, in addition to the multiplication of non-United Nations initiatives, results in some cases in a duplication of effort and an increasing burden on countries to satisfy the differing needs and requirements of the various partners. Furthermore, the numerous accounting and reporting rules of various partners (i.e., donor countries and organizations of the United Nations system) have placed an additional burden on African countries, which already have a scarcity of skills and information technology.

IV. Modalities for further action

25. Although a number of actions have been taken in the spirit of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, a great deal of effort is required to develop mechanisms and frameworks that will ensure that actions currently being taken can be applied in a consistent manner. This will include action, at both the national and international level, in the following areas:

(a) Development of national and regional plans of action for human rights;

(b) Promotion of transparency and accountability in public administration;

(c) Enhancement of administrative capacity;

(d) Creation of an enabling environment for foreign direct investment and economic growth;

(e) Enactment of needed economic reforms;

(f) Investment in human resources;

(g) Addressing of public health issues;

(h) Focusing attention on social justice and achieving social development;

(i) Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;

(j) Restructuring and increasing international aid, including ODA;

(k) Reduction of the debt burden;

(l) Opening of international markets;

(m) Provision of support for regional cooperation and integration;

(n) Harmonization and coordination of current international initiatives;

(o) Transfer of technology, in particular information technology;

(p) Capacity-building;

(q) Supporting an enabling environment for the promotion of investment flows.

26. There is clearly a need for regular monitoring in order to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations made under the above-mentioned themes. The Working Group emphasizes the need to strengthen, at the regional and subregional levels,

intergovernmental coordination mechanisms in the political, economic, financial and social fields. The Group commends the efforts already made in this regard.

27. The Working Group recognizes the need to integrate a gender perspective into the implementation of the recommendations and proposes to the General Assembly that it request relevant bodies of the United Nations system to conduct, in cooperation with African Governments, a thorough study of obstacles to the participation of women in efforts aimed at securing peace and development in Africa.

28. The Working Group recognizes that fulfilling the rights of the child, in conformity with relevant international conventions, is an incontestable investment for peace and development in Africa. The Group proposes that special attention be given to children and that the main obstacles for the attainment of their rights be identified and addressed. The special session of the General Assembly to be convened in 2001 in follow-up to the World Summit for Children will be important in this context and the Group encourages Member States and all relevant partners to contribute to its successful outcome.

29. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon the international community, FAO and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system to continue, while implementing the decisions adopted at the World Food Summit, to pay special attention to the negative effects of food insecurity on the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

30. Although a number of actions have been taken, by OAU in particular and by the international community in general, with a view to finding solutions to the ongoing armed conflicts in the African continent, the Working Group notes that it is necessary to strengthen the mechanism for the prevention and resolution of conflict. The Group proposes that the General Assembly continue to appeal to the international community to reinforce its efforts in the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, and in particular to ensure the protection of civilians and the incorporation of demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration programmes within peacekeeping operations, where appropriate.

31. In regard to the thematic areas outlined by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/234 and those identified by the Working Group, the Group considered ways and means to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, and arrived at a number of proposals, as set out below.

A. Poverty eradication

32. The Working Group notes that implementation of the vast majority of the recommendations of the Secretary-General would lead to poverty reduction. The proposals submitted below under the other themes are thus aimed at addressing this fundamental, cross-cutting issue.

33. **Education**. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly invite donors to support increased efforts by Governments to promote and strengthen human resource development in Africa, to achieve quality basic education for all and to invest in secondary and tertiary education with the enhanced cooperation of the international community, along the lines of the objectives defined by the Dakar Framework for Action on education for all, adopted by the World Education Forum in April 2000.

34. **Environment**. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon all Member States to ensure that environmental considerations are adequately integrated into all relevant aspects of the promotion of sustainable development in Africa, and to put forward concrete proposals on how to improve these efforts. Areas of particular interest in this context could include the relationship between poverty eradication and environmental protection and environmental problems as potential causes of conflict.

B. Debt relief

35. Since debt repayment drains valuable resources from the rehabilitation and construction of essential development infrastructure and programmes designed to address the crippling issues of poverty and inequality, the Working Group proposes to the General Assembly that it call upon the international community to work towards the cancellation, on a once and for all basis, where appropriate, of the debt of the least developed African countries, including those emerging from conflicts.

36. The Working Group notes the inadequacy of contributions to the HIPC Trust Fund, which are provided on a voluntary basis. The Group urges all donors to the HIPC Trust Fund to make their contributions available as soon as possible and to work towards fairer burden-sharing with regards to the financing of the Trust Fund. In addition, the Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon all creditor countries to make a firm commitment to take action to write off the HIPC debt in a timely way, consistent with the urgent need for poverty eradication and enhanced economic growth in Africa. In this regard, the Group recommends that consideration be given to the proposal by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to create an independent body that would undertake an assessment of the sustainability of African debt with a commitment to write off HIPC debt that is deemed unpayable.

37. In addition, the Working Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon the international community to consider providing further debt relief to other highly indebted African countries which are at present not eligible for the enhanced HIPC initiative. The Group also proposes that the General Assembly call upon the international community to take concerted national and international action to address effectively debt problems of the middle-income African countries with a view to resolving their potential long-term debt sustainability problems through various debt treatment measures, including, as appropriate, orderly mechanisms for debt reduction. The Group encourages all creditor and debtor countries to utilize, to the fullest possible extent, where appropriate, all existing mechanisms for debt reduction.

C. Financing for development

38. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly ensure that the special concerns of African countries be taken into account in the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development, to be held in 2001.

39. The Working Group also proposes that the General Assembly call upon donor countries to continue their efforts to arrive at a consensus in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on untying of development assistance to African countries.

40. The Working Group recommends that the General Assembly call upon donor countries to make concerted efforts to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for ODA for developing countries and 0.15 per cent for the least developed countries. In this regard, the Group proposes that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General (or relevant Member States) to organize a meeting on the provision of development assistance to Africa with the objective of sharing the experiences of donor countries that have reached or surpassed the established targets.

41. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon the United Nations system to redouble its efforts to support African countries in the development of effective diversification strategies and, towards this end, call upon donor countries to support this effort.

D. HIV/AIDS and malaria

42. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly give particular attention to the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa, and that it recommend that Member States support and actively participate in the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa (IPAA) and support UNAIDS in this endeavour.

43. The Working Group also proposes that the General Assembly invite the Economic and Social Council to consider the following themes in its future work:

(a) Ways and means to incorporate HIV/AIDS prevention in development activities of the United Nations system in Africa, in particular in the framework of IPAA;

(b) Ways and means of promoting inter-country cooperation in order to encourage best practice and sharing of experience, in particular in the framework of IPAA;

(c) Ways and means of promoting and supporting regional responses to HIV/AIDS prevention, with particular attention given to the Lomé Declaration on HIV/AIDS;

(d) Ways and means of utilizing intellectual property rights to serve the needs of AIDS prevention and treatment.

44. The Working Group further proposes that the General Assembly call upon the Secretary-General to continue vigorously to advocate, inter alia, the development and production of drugs and vaccines already identified as effective and relatively inexpensive, and making them available to the poor, by forging partnerships between private and public actors and establishing a fund to that end.

45. The Working Group also proposes that the General Assembly express its keen interest in additional discussions among relevant United Nations bodies, Member States, industry and other relevant organizations, in order to achieve progress with regard to prevention, access to treatment and care. The Group stresses the need to make low-cost generic drugs available to poor countries. In this regard, the Group recommends that the General Assembly ensure that the proposal by WHO to set up a reference group composed of African countries and pharmaceutical companies be further explored and supported.

46. In addition, the Working Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon the Secretary-General to continue to advocate the creation of an understanding on the merits of investing in the prevention and treatment of diseases of priority concern, such as malaria.

E. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building

47. The Working Group commends and fully supports the efforts made by OAU, including those aimed at strengthening its mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, to promote and sustain peace, security and stability in Africa. The Group emphasizes that further efforts are needed to prevent violent conflicts at their earliest stages. The Group recognizes the need to strengthen the early warning capacity of the United Nations, OAU and African subregional organizations to respond to conflict situations on the continent. In this regard, the Group emphasizes the need to strengthen and support the OAU early warning mechanism. The Group also expresses its full support for the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa process initiated by Africa and calls upon the Secretary-General to explore ways of providing support to this initiative, in particular the plan of action and implementation arrangements established under the process.

48. Recalling paragraph 17 of agreed conclusions 1998/1 adopted by the Economic and Social Council, in which the Council noted the need to develop, through a strategic framework, when appropriate, a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis,[4] the Working Group proposes that the General Assembly request the Council to consider creating an ad hoc advisory group on countries emerging from conflict, with a view to assessing their economic needs and elaborating a long-term programme of support for implementation that begins with the integration of relief into development. The programme could build upon initiatives already taken for specific countries by various bilateral and multilateral partners.

49. The Working Group welcomes the creation of the Post-Conflict Fund and multi-donor trust funds being used to finance a variety of post-conflict activities in some African countries, and urges the General Assembly to call upon Member States to provide, when possible, additional resources to those funds.

50. The Working Group proposes that greater financial support be given for the implementation of demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration programmes, with special attention paid to the situation of child soldiers. The Group proposes that the funding of such programmes through the regular budget of peacekeeping operations could be given consideration as an alternative approach for an effective and permanent solution to the shortfall in resources.

51. In recognition of the widespread unemployment among youth and the attractions that looting through war could present, the Working Group recommends that the General Assembly urge the International Labour Organization to extend its "Jobs for Africa" programme to countries emerging from conflict as its contribution to post-conflict peace-building, together with its ongoing programme on assisting the reintegration of demobilized soldiers and other war-affected groups.

52. The Working Group urges the General Assembly to call for increased and sustained assistance and support to the United Nations Children's Fund, UNHCR and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other relevant agencies of the United Nations system in order to intensify their efforts in facilitating

the demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers.

F. Refugees and internally displaced persons

53. The Working Group urges the international community and relevant United Nations agencies to assist in the implementation of the Recommendations on Returnees, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa,[5] adopted by OAU at the ministerial meeting held at Khartoum in December 1998.

54. The Working Group recommends that the General Assembly encourage the Secretary-General, in consultation with the affected States, to explore the best ways for the provision of assistance to alleviate the heavy burden of countries hosting refugees, in particular the least developed countries, with particular reference to the environment and infrastructure.

G. Coordination

55. The Working Group recommends that the General Assembly urge the Secretary-General, in consultation with the President of the World Bank, to further clarify and strengthen the links among the various coordination mechanisms, including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank, with a view to streamlining them and creating complementarity and synergy.

56. The Working Group also recommends that the General Assembly invite bilateral donors to become more active in coordinating mechanisms for development assistance at the country level.

57. The Working Group further recommends that the General Assembly request, where appropriate, the Secretary-General to take the lead in promoting the use of sector-wide approaches as one of the tools for coordination at the country level in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

H. Need for follow-up

58. The Working Group emphasizes that the General Assembly has primary responsibility in continuing to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General in all their aspects, with due regard being given to the respective competences of the other main organs of the United Nations. In this regard, the Group considers it important that all future progress reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report (A/52/871-S/1998/318) be issued as official records of the General Assembly.

59. The Working Group acknowledges the need for a coordinated follow-up to all major conferences and summits by Governments, regional organizations and all of the bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates.

60. The Working Group had monitored the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General as a whole. Given time constraints, however, the Group focused on the chosen thematic areas identified by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/92 and at the organizational session of the Working Group. The review of progress contained in the present report, however, reveals a need for continued monitoring, not only in the areas of focus, but in all other areas included in the report of the Secretary-General. It should be noted that, in some of those areas, little or no action has been taken. Accordingly, the Group proposes:

(a) That its mandate be extended to enable a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General;

(b) That, in order to monitor effectively the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, wherever applicable benchmarks should be developed to assess impact and measure performance;

(c) That a limited number of thematic working groups be established to make specific proposals on a number of remaining issues which were not covered in the previous three sessions of the Working Group, or which have not been adequately discussed.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3/Rev.1), chap. V, para. 6.

[2] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit, 13-17 November 1996* (WFS 96/REP), Part One, appendix.

[3] See A/52/480, sect. IV.C.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth-third Session, Supplement No. 3 and corrigendum* (A/54/3 and Corr.1), chap. VII, para. 5.

[5] A/54/682, annex II.

Annex

Documentation and proceedings of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

I. Documentation

1. In the course of its work, the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318);

(b) Report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 1999;[a]

(c) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Development of Africa: implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council and the General Assembly, specifically the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa" (A/54/133-E/1999/79);

(d) Progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1999/1008);

(e) Letter dated 27 April 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Egypt and Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Cairo Declaration and the Cairo Plan of Action adopted by the Africa-European Union Summit, held at Cairo on 3 and 4 April 2000 (A/54/855-E/2000/44);

(f) Provisional agenda for the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/1);

(g) Provisional agenda for the second and third sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/2);

(h) Draft provisional agenda (A/AC.258/CRP.1);

(i) Summary of the proposals made by delegations on 13 and 14 March 2000 (A/AC.258/CRP.2);

(j) Implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on Africa (A/AC.258/CRP.3 and Add.1);

(k) Draft programme of work (A/AC.258/CRP.4);

(l) Draft report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/CRP.5/Rev.2).

II. Proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group

A. First session

2. On 7 March 2000, Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the General Assembly, opened the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group and made a statement.

3. At its 1st meeting, on 7 March, the Working Group adopted the agenda for its first session (A/AC.258/1), which read as follows:

"1. Opening of the session.

"2. Adoption of the agenda.

"3. Organization of work.

"4. General exchange of views.

"5. Consideration of modalities and arrangements for the effective functioning of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

"6. Other matters."

4. During the four meetings held during its first session, the Working Group held a general exchange of views on how to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. For this purpose, the Working Group requested that relevant information be provided by various departments of the

United Nations Secretariat, United Nations organizations and programmes, and specialized agencies.

B. Second session

5. At its 5th meeting, on 15 May, the Group adopted the agenda for its second and third sessions (A/AC.258/2), which read as follows:

"1. Opening of the session.

"2. Adoption of the agenda.

"3. Organization of work.

"4. Monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

"5. Monitoring of the implementation of the agreed conclusions 1999/2 and of decision 1999/270 of the Economic and Social Council, as well as poverty eradication, debt relief, the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and support to countries in post-conflict situations.

"6. Report to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

"7. Other matters."

6. At its second session, the Working Group focused its deliberations on agenda items 4 and 5. It had before it a conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.258/CRP.3 and Add.1), concerning the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

7. At its 5th meeting, on 15 May, the Working Group heard introductory statements by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the representative of the Secretary-General regarding the status of implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations. Members of the Working Group held a dialogue with the United Nations officials on some aspects contained in the conference room paper.

8. At its subsequent meetings, the Working Group heard presentations on agenda item 5, by representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Economic Commission of Africa, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the World Food Programme. Members of the Working Group held a very useful exchange of views with the speakers and discussions among themselves on the achievement of progress and obstacles encountered, as well as new ideas and suggestions for the more effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

C. Third session

9. At its 10th and 11th meetings, on 17 and 18 July, the Working Group heard presentations by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, respectively. Members of the Working Group held informative dialogues with the speakers on support to countries in post-conflict situations in general and in the case of Liberia in particular, as well as on the situation of children in armed conflict.

10. During its third session, the Working Group devoted most of its time to the consideration of its draft report, as submitted by its Bureau. At its 14th meeting, on 21 July, the Working Group adopted by consensus its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

Notes

* *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3/Rev.1).

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